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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PBTS](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#) [RU](#) [NO](#)

SUBJECT: USNATO AMBASSADOR DAALDER'S DISCUSSION WITH  
NORWEGIAN DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER IN OSLO

Classified By: CDA James Heg for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: In discussions with visiting USNATO Ambassador Ivo Daalder in Oslo August 17, Norwegian Deputy Minister of Defense Espen Barth-Eide and Director for Security Policy Svein Ejfjstad said they looked forward to reviewing the new COMISAF Strategic requirements this fall; suggested that dropping third site requirements would ease Russian concerns about Missile Defense (MD); encouraged "re-hatting" under NATO many ongoing bilateral and multilateral military exercises in Norway and throughout Europe; and agreed on the importance of having an open, appropriately timed discussion on NATO's Nuclear Posture Review in conjunction with the new Strategic Concept. (Note: Amb. Daalder's discussion with Foreign Minister Stoere is being reported septel.) End Summary.

Next Steps in Afghanistan  
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12. (C) USNATO Amb. Ivo Daalder, accompanied by Oslo Charge d'affaires Heg, A/DCM, A/DATT, and pol-mil officer met with Norway's Deputy Defense Minister Espen Barth-Eide in Oslo August 17. MOD Policy Director Svein Ejfjstad and Norway's NATO Ambassador Kim Traavik also participated, along with other MOD representatives. Barth-Eide said he looked forward to reviewing COMISAF's upcoming strategic requirements for Afghanistan, and participating in the September/October NAC discussion on new ISF requirements for supporting post-election Afghanistan. Barth-Eide remained non-committal on the possibility of increasing Norway's financial contributions to meet the increased need likely to be identified in COMISAF's report. He noted instead that Norway's strategy would be to advocate directing increasing portions of the funds it has already committed in 2009 and 2010 to increasing training of and partnering with Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), to include OMLT activities, given their success to date. The Deputy Defense Minister also emphasized that Norway could not sustain any more troops abroad than currently deployed with NATO in Afghanistan, with the UN in Chad, and with the EU Counter Piracy Mission Atalanta (Norway deployed with the latter on August 1). On strengthening the Afghan army and police force, Barth-Eide understood USNATO Amb Daalder's point that any recommended increase in ANSF would likely require vastly greater financial contributions than what was briefed to allies in April 2009. Trying to put the best face on what appeared to be the GON's likely inability to contribute more, he stated hopefully that, "The goal is to transform the conflict. As

things normalize, the need for such huge assistance levels should go down over time." Barth-Eide also opined that the impact of building such a strong military in a generally dysfunctional country, and the reaction of Afghanistan's neighbors to that prospect, should be taken into consideration.

#### Missile Defense and Russia

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13. (C) Barth-Eide noted that U.S. willingness to drop third site discussions would be key to future Russian acceptance of any new NATO Missile Defense posture. However, he added, consideration of Polish and Czech needs for NATO to manifest itself concretely on their soil should be considered. He agreed that the more NATO emphasizes the uniqueness of those two countries, the more irritated Russia becomes. Barth-Eide emphasized that future NATO training and exercises at various strategic locations throughout Alliance territory (as per Norway's Core Area Initiative) could serve to emphasize the importance of Article 5, which may help to assuage Polish, Czech, and Baltic countries' concerns and reduce Russian angst.

#### High North, Article 5, and the Strategic Concept

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14. (C) Barth-Eide noted that it would be fairly cost-effective and painless to "re-hat" current and ongoing bilateral and multilateral military exercises in the High North/Arctic area as NATO exercises, for example, tied to the

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NATO Response Force initiative. He said the exercises would increase the political relevance and public legitimacy of NATO in Norway, as the population would see the benefit of the NATO alliance in protecting Norway's coastline and allied interests in the High North. That public goodwill toward NATO could then be leveraged into maintaining support for out of area operations such as ISAF in Afghanistan.

15. (C) The Norwegian participants noted that NATO activities in the High North were an important "sub-theme" in Norway's September 2008 Core Initiative Non-Paper on NATO's future. They said that the exercises would also help in countering efforts by some NATO allies to seek additional guarantees beyond Article 5, and would therefore help ensure Article 5's credibility and relevance. Ambassador Daalder noted that increased NATO training and exercises on allied territory, and shoring up the credibility of the Article 5 guarantee in general, should be a key part of NATO's Strategic Concept. Norway feels a strong solidarity with the Baltics on this issue, Barth-Eide noted, adding that if Baltic states need an additional guarantee on security from U.S., Article 5's credibility would be undermined. NATO-flagged High North exercises, along with re-flagged U.S.-Iceland exercises in Iceland, could serve to reassure NATO allies while not provoking Russia, if they were seen to be part of other routine NATO exercises throughout alliance territory (for example, with Portugal in the Azores) under the Article 5 rubric.

#### NATO Reform, HLG, and the Nuclear Posture Review

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16. (C) MOD Director for Security Policy Svein Efstestad noted that the Nuclear Planning Group/High Level Group meeting September 11 is unfortunately timed because 1) the Nuclear Posture Review will not be completed until December, and 2) discussion on NATO's Strategic Concept will be part of the meeting. USNATO Ambassador Dalder noted that discussions on nuclear weapons issues should be part of the Strategic Concept and that the HLG discussions should take account of the possibility that political guidance on these issues might change. Efstestad commented that the reluctance of many NATO allies to debate nuclear weapons issues in Europe openly is

due to the myriad NATO viewpoints on the issue. He said new allies don't want a debate, as they believe in NATO maintaining sub-strategic weapons, while basing countries ironically want neither to open the debate nor to openly maintain sub-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, given delicate public opinion in their countries toward nuclear weapons. The U.S. position, meanwhile, has seemed ambivalent, as the U.S. would like NATO's posture to reflect the needs of other allies. This leaves Norway in a unique position to push any new agenda or debate on the matter, Efjestad said. USNATO Ambassador responded that review of nuclear weapons issues and strategy within the alliance, although difficult, is absolutely necessary. The question is timing. Efjestad, who is a member of the HLG, said that after more than 15 years with hardly any HLG debate on the issue, the September meeting might be best used to get agreement to "look at the issue further."

17. (C) Barth-Eide noted that addressing the NPR is critically important at this time as the U.S. administration is actively pursuing an improved bilateral relationship with Russia that has a bearing on the issue. "NATO's role must be defined," he said. He concluded by noting that negative popular opinion could turn the tide against tactical nuclear weapons, but President Obama's strong commitment to global disarmament may help set a more productive tone for such debate.  
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